

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the existing Abstract with the following Abstract

SATELLITE COMMUNICATION METHOD AND APPARATUS

ABSTRACT

A satellite messaging system having at least one earth station which sends messages to a mobile terminal either on a TDM channel or a to-mobile messaging channel, depending on the length of the message. Messages are formatted into a variable number of frames, with each frame containing a variable but equal number of data packets. Messages and signaling information are transmitted by the mobile terminals on a signaling channel of frames comprising both long and short slots. The divisions between the slots are controlled by the earth station. The mobile terminal may operate in either an earth station registered mode or a network registered mode. The earth station may operate in a standard traffic mode, in a low traffic mode, or in a high traffic mode. The earth station stores lists of addresses which are indexed using a short-form addressing scheme, and can be modified by the mobile terminals. The mobile terminals can request entry into a sleep mode.